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THE  
PARENTS'  
REVIEW

Founder and Editor 1890-1923 - CHARLOTTE MASON

Editor 1923—1949: Elsie Kitching

EDITOR . . ELIZABETH L. MOLYNEUX

*"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life"*

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
IN MEMORIAM—ELSIE KITCHING .. .. .	35
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL LIFE AND HOME LIFE— Charlotte Mason	51
RAPANUI—W. M. Clarke .. .. .	53
THE DETECTION AND PREVENTION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN YOUNG PERSONS— Sir Basil Henriques, C.B.E., M.A., J.P.	54
HELPING IN THE HOUSE—Monica Allpress .. .. .	57
OLD TOYS—Annabel Millar .. .. .	58
LETTER BAG .. .. .	59
OUR WORK .. .. .	59
P.N.E.U. NOTES .. .. .	59
BOOKS .. .. .	61

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THE  
**PARENTS' REVIEW**

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Vol. LXVII. No. 2]

[FEBRUARY, 1956

IN MEMORIAM

ELSIE KITCHING

AUGUST 15TH, 1870—DECEMBER 29TH, 1955

*The Times* of December 30th headed the obituary notice of our dearly beloved friend 'Disciple of Charlotte Mason'. Could anything else have pleased her more for she lived to interpret her teacher and friend to each successive generation!

With marvellous instinct she recognised in the writings and speeches of contemporary educationalists, philosophers and scientists ideas that were in harmony with a continuation of Charlotte Mason's thought. She carried on a correspondence with such thinkers of the day, introduced Miss Mason's books to them and pointed out, in the pages of *The Parents' Review*, how alive and modern our founder still was.

'The daughter of J. A. Kitching, she was born on August 15, 1870, and was educated largely at home. She took the intermediate examination in Arts at London University in 1893, but instead of proceeding to a degree she joined Miss Mason in the then young Parents' National Educational Union. As private secretary to Miss Mason and secretary to the House of Education and to the Parents' Union School, she played a part second only to Miss Mason in building up the P.N.E.U. movement.

When Miss Mason died in 1923, though the idea had by then caught on on a national scale, she had still the task of keeping it going. Her thirty years' service was rewarded in that year by her appointment as Director of the Parents' Union School, a post in which she succeeded Miss Mason and continued to hold until 1948. She remained editor of the *Parents' Review* until the next year, so that her period of service to P.N.E.U. extended to fifty-six years. After her retirement she for long nursed a project of writing a biography of Charlotte Mason, but nothing has yet been published.'

Such is the brief outline of Elsie Kitching's life as printed in *The Times*. How much more could we, who knew and loved her, add! She succeeded Charlotte Mason as Director of the Parents' Union School and Editor of the *Parents' Review*: in the former capacity 'Kit-kit's' love and understanding of children and their needs, and her long apprenticeship as Charlotte Mason's secretary, made her wonderful letters to the members of the Parents' Union School stimulating and inspiring. Her help to members of the Parents' National Educational Union was further demonstrated in the *Parents' Review* which grew in stature under her as Editor.



*Travel - Hallam - Household*  
*2nd C. M. M.*

Elsie Kitching's mental powers and width of reading were extraordinary; she loved good literature but had also a scientific mind and rejoiced in talks on the radio which let her into some of the secrets of modern discovery. Many early generations of College students will remember her talks on Art, which Miss Mason encouraged her to take after Mrs. Firth's death. Her great love of, and interest in, bird-lore made her bird walks an inspiration to all privileged to share them.

Miss Mason appointed Miss Kitching a life-member of the Ambleside Council (now the Charlotte Mason Foundation) and she helped the Council by her wise advice in the guidance of the College and the Parents' Union School. She died happy in the knowledge that all was well with both these beloved institutions, and that they and the P.N.E.U. are bringing happiness and guidance to an ever-growing number of parents all over the world.

To her friends Elsie Kitching's going is a deep and abiding sorrow coupled with gratitude to Almighty God for all she was allowed to accomplish; and thankfulness that she passed on without suffering, and with unimpaired powers of mind. Hers was so humble and gentle a spirit that she never knew what she meant to us, but we know and bow our heads in silent respect, love and gratitude.

I have received a gracious message of sympathy from Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, coupled with deep appreciation of her work as Editor of the *Parents' Review*.

HENRIETTA FRANKLIN

(The Hon. Mrs. Franklin, C.B.E.)

Elsie Kitching was born at Stoke Newington in 1870 into a family which presently grew to consist of three boys and three girls. They led the quiet nursery life of those days, in a spacious house with a large garden. Mrs. Kitching was a stimulating presence in the household. She had wide interests and had great practical capacity, as well as an able mind for affairs and property. Early in her married life she became a keen student of educational matters, often speaking on the upbringing of children and being particularly interested in the mission field. Mr. Kitching was of a more passive nature, a busy man of business. He was gifted with an excellent physique which enabled him to ride a tricycle happily at the age of ninety-five.

Elsie Kitching as a child and all through her life preferred to keep in the background. She never willingly took a front place nor did she as a child go gladly to children's parties. There were yearly visits to the seaside but soon business difficulties brought financial troubles, many hardships with frequent changes of house. Elsie's school days were spent in High Schools of the rigid, old-fashioned kind. She always drew a veil over these years saying 'I never learned anything till I came to Ambleside'. Presently she and her elder sister Maggie went together to a boarding school in Byfleet with the view to working later for degrees. Elsie 'did not get on', but she remembered gratefully Dr. Bullinger and his Bible Studies and his ability to recognise each kind of tree at night by the sound of their branches. Both sisters went on to the Jersey Ladies' College at St. Helier where Maggie did so well that she could go to Oxford to take her degree. Elsie spoke with affec-

*She*

*Pasture Study & Architecture*  
*Stream of life*

tion of Miss McCabe of the Ladies' College, but here again she 'did not get on' and only attained to the Intermediate Arts standard. There was something nervous in her make up which through her growing years seemed to cause strain. She also had two severe illnesses which held her back.

At home the Kitching family were all growing up. When they were together they spent happy hours singing. Elsie played the piano well and musically and loved to accompany the other members of the family. The brothers and sisters between them could supply every voice, Elsie contributing alto and Mr. Kitching bass when wanted. They sang much religious music, but also comic songs and contemporary part songs such as *Oh who will o'er the downs so free?* and were in great demand locally outside the family. How happy Elsie must have been at the piano in the musical background! Theatre-going was never a possibility but an occasional concert was always a joy.

Another interest shared by the whole family, inspired by Mrs. Kitching, was the field of missionary endeavour. When Elsie's eldest brother was convalescing at home after a severe illness, Mrs. Kitching taught the boy herself and encouraged him to share and learn all domestic skills. 'When you are grown up you may wish to be a missionary and then you will have to know how to do everything.' The boy became clever with his needle and in the kitchen and could mend anything in the house. Years later as a Bishop, it was to him that the native chiefs brought their watches to be mended.

Knowledge of the stars and interest in scientific matters were also shared by the family.

When Elsie left the Jersey Ladies' College she spent some months at home. It was a time of great financial difficulty and Mrs. Kitching was living at Bognor. Elsie was far from well and felt that life held no future for her. 'I don't know what to do for her,' thought her mother and the weary months went by. It was the year 1893. Winnie Kitching had just finished her training at Ambleside and was also at home. Charlotte Mason had work to do at the Bishop Otter College at Chichester and asked Mrs. Kitching whether she might be her guest and walk in daily to Chichester. This was happily arranged. Every evening on her return, Charlotte Mason was helped with her letter-writing by the two sisters, a happy time for all. The last day of the visit Mrs. Kitching took C. M. Mason into her confidence about Elsie's future. 'What am I to do with her?' 'Let me have her,' was the answer, 'Let her come back to Ambleside with me.' And so it was that Elsie Kitching was given her work and the devoted friendship of a lifetime. She travelled to Ambleside with Miss Mason and there she spent her whole life.

The next years of Elsie's life are indistinguishable from those of Charlotte Mason, in work, in difficulties, in endeavour and in travel. In 1923 came the shattering loss of her friend and leader. Undaunted, Elsie carried on the work of the Parents' Union School as Director and continued to edit the *Parents' Review*. She who loved to be in the background had to come into the foreground. All through the Second World War she worked on; then in 1948 she gave over both Directorship and Editorship and settled down to write Charlotte Mason's Story.

*Elsie*



Low Nook, Ambleside became her home, in close touch with the work she so dearly loved.

Through all the busy years Elsie Kitching had no moment to read or to ponder C. M. Mason's writings. Now came the joy of their discovery. Perhaps of all she found in them, the aspect of thought expressed in 'Education is the Science of Relations' claimed her most intense sympathy and interest. She perceived that scientific thinkers of the present day were discovering the same truth from another angle. *Wait Half a Century*, which she compiled in 1952 was the result of this perception. She did not step aside from her work on Charlotte Mason's Story in order to compile the booklet; to her it was a part of the story for (she thought) 'Charlotte Mason's story is one of thought rather than of incident.'

The very last work on the story was achieved last November. She was considering a chapter describing 'the liberal education for all' movement (the work of C. M. Mason in the national schools, 1913 onwards). E. Lyttleton speaking in 1922 had said that C. M. Mason had made 'the great educational discovery of the age'. 'I want to put that quotation somewhere in the chapter'—'Yes,' said her colleague, 'but what was the discovery he meant? I cannot find any direct statement.' That began a two-day search. No-one loved a search as did Elsie Kitching, the room soon became a welter of old *Parents' Reviews* and papers. 'Ah!' she said at last, 'this is it,' and in triumph she pointed to a passage in *The Scope of Continuation Schools*, by C. M. Mason, which is given below:

'What we have perhaps failed to discover hitherto is the immense hunger for knowledge (curiosity) existing in everyone and the immeasurable power of attention with which everyone is endued; that everyone likes knowledge best in a literary form; that the knowledge should be exceedingly various concerning many things on which the mind of man reflects; but that knowledge is acquired only by what we may call 'the act of knowing' which is both encouraged and tested by narration, and which further requires the later test and record afforded by examinations.'

'The discovery,' said Elsie Kitching, 'is that *Persons* have *minds* and that minds need *relations* and that relations are inspired by the Holy Spirit, but we must find a better way to say it.' And there her search ended.

E. CHOLMONDELEY (C.M.C.)

#### SPEAKING PERSONALLY

Dear Miss Kitching: she has been one of the props of my life ever since I was handed over to her in 1909, very raw and very frightened, to be her first ever assistant in the innumerable tasks which fell to her as Charlotte Mason's secretary. She was a young woman then, quick as a flash of lightning in all she did, comprehending in her scope the most varied assortment of occupations from arranging the flowers to setting examination questions and reviewing books. She kept all the College and Practising School records and accounts, and attended to all the details of Miss Mason's personal comfort and well-being. From the first day of our association working for and with her was an education and inspiration, and yet the homeliest and most natural way of happy living. I left her in 1912, but never was dissociated with her in thought and spirit, it was impossible to be so for her imprint was so deep and indelible it would have lasted a life time.

When I rejoined her in 1927, Miss Mason had died and Miss Kitching was Director of the Parents' Union School; a much more powerful personality though still shrinking from the least spark of limelight and encased in an armour of humility. Once again I felt that power went forth from her, not only the power of a keen tenacious mind but powerful gentleness, wisdom and affection. One stood in the presence of greatness when with her: to live and work with it day by day was to be especially blessed. And such fun to be behind the scenes with greatness, and to know that the famous Director was a wonderful reviver of old hats, and loved putting new touches on clothes grown boring while still too new to throw out.

Others will testify to her deep religious feeling, to her wide learning which put so many of us to shame, to her sparkling and often mischievous gaiety. All of these she possessed in full measure to the very end of her selfless and dedicated life. None of us can sorrow over this end, painless and peaceful in her own beloved surroundings; but still with Christiana some of us must exclaim: 'I know not how to be willing you should leave us in our pilgrimage: you have been so faithful and loving to us, you have fought so stoutly for us, you have been so hearty in counselling of us, that I shall never forget your favour towards us'.

IRENE STEPHENS

(formerly Principal of the P.U.S.)

#### FROM THE CHIEF EXAMINER OF THE P.U.S.

I have just heard that Miss Kitching has at last ended her long course. I think of you all in the loss of so fine and lovable a woman.

I worked with her closely from before the death of Charlotte Mason to whom she introduced me. I had many visits with her: at first at Ambleside and later for the after-session discussions in London.

In our work she passed on from Miss Mason a strong tradition of respect for an examiner—I must use that word little as I felt it fitted me in my apprenticeship to the P.U.S. She was patient in getting me to understand the important principles: and I was fortunate in finding them so close to my own ideas of education as a practising teacher, in school and out. And how wisely she wore the mantle of her dearly loved leader! We have made changes—such as that from marks to written notes, the most important of them all; but they have ever been in the line of healthy growth from the plant Miss Mason established.

Personally—well, one cannot tell all the little touches that build up a friendship: such as her outward care for my well-being at Scale How and in other rooms in Ambleside; and, more intimately, the rides and walks with her—always in the warm atmosphere of a shared enthusiasm. To the very end, preoccupied as she was with the biography of Charlotte Mason, her mind and talk was never far from the central theme of her life; and yet it was no more 'shop' than—what shall I say?—the companionship of some other pilgrim and his friends on their journey.

Dear friend she was: I have had none other with whom I have shared more eagerly our ideals for the life of the young ones we help to care for. It is the close of a great chapter—but the work goes on.

VYVYAN RICHARDS



Nearly thirty years ago, as a P.U.S. child attracted by the signature at the bottom of my exam. report, I was told that it was Miss Kitching 'who knows all about every single child in the P.U.S.' Since then, as a student at Scale How, and particularly since my marriage, I have come to appreciate fully her wonderful capacity for knowing and caring about all the 'persons' she met.

She took a great interest in my family as it grew, and I soon discovered that she loved hearing the sort of stories which delight fond parents and tend to bore everyone else. So I gradually found myself storing up things to write and tell her. She nearly always answered by return, often in her own handwriting, her letters bubbling with pleasure, just as I could imagine her eyes twinkling over some little thing I told her, especially if it illustrated a point in Miss Mason's teaching. Sometimes she would send a pamphlet or cutting in connection with a remark I had made.

Twice I was able to take some of the children to see her. Each time she was ready for us; there was a bird book for the nature lover, an amusing trinket for the restless one, even our family portrait Christmas card brought out after some months to discuss with us. I remember that she amused me with stories of my own children that I had forgotten. I don't believe she ever forgot. Last time we saw her was at the 1954 Conference. She had written to say that she would like to meet my husband. So we put our name in the book and went with our three and two year olds at the appointed time. I had to go up first and there she was, the same as ever, waiting for me in the passage. When I returned with the children, I was asked to get the bird book admired last time (and remembered even now) and some photographs of P.U.S. pupils overseas. So that she could get to know my husband, she then sent the children to the P.U.S. room downstairs.

Now my husband has strong opinions that the different faculties in the University should mix at both staff and student level, and he tries to carry this out in his musical activities throughout the University. As a Dean and member of the Senatus he knows his colleagues pretty well, but it soon became evident that Miss Kitching, from the seclusion of Low Nook and in the midst of all her other interests, knew as much, and more, about many of their recent activities as he did. They talked of many topics of mutual interest. That my husband had known Professor de Burgh pleased her much. Her lunch arrived and I suggested that we went, but the suggestion was waved aside. Eventually, conscious that many people would want to see her, I managed to bring their conversation to an end. My husband was delighted at her agility of mind and practical and up-to-date attitude. It is hard to believe that she was then eighty-three.

After this visit her letters contained affectionate references to my husband, and I in turn sent her news of his doings and she was able to hear him broadcast once or twice. It was lovely to know that she was there taking such an interest in us all, and yet it was an interest in just a single child in the P.U.S. To how many others also must she have extended her care and affection!

Only yesterday the thought crossed my mind, 'I must write and tell Miss Kitching', for I had not heard the news of her death. Yet even in

19p6 emc72

our sadness at her departure the very thought of her causes us to smile with pleasure at the joy we had in her. It is as if, like one of her beloved migrants, she has flown to another country where there will assuredly be plenty of room for her delight in the small as well as in the profound things of life.

BETTY NEWMAN (C.M.C.)

Everyone loved Miss Kitching because she was a friend to all. There must be hundreds who could write of her fun and humour, her wise counsel or her overflowing enthusiasm. What was specially found by those who worked with her?

Yes—'with her' is the right way to express the relationship. For she had supremely the art of letting one feel that she valued the opinions and advice of all, though at the same time her mind re-considered everything, so that ideas were used in her own way.

The members of the Staff of the Parents' Union School—to which I belonged from 1938 to 1947—were free to carry on the work, each in her own way, though plans had always to be dependent on the needs of the day's posts or on any new plan from Miss Kitching. Yet for all our freedom, she had an uncanny knack of knowing immediately if anything unusual was going on in the P.U.S. room and she would slip in from some reason. Or some days she would be constantly in and out because her mind was working so busily on something in which each of us had to share in turn: we might be called into her room any number of times and would need to be alert to keep abreast of the speed with which her mind was moving. One piece of our work however was treated as sacred, that of checking addresses and counting fillings for the envelopes taking out programmes and examinations term by term. Once we had reached that stage, Miss Kitching's head had only to come round the door to retire with the swiftness and modesty of the child who sees at once he has come into the wrong place; her work would wait on ours on those days.

\* \* \* \*

What an anxious term we had that autumn towards the middle of the war when Miss Kitching was so ill! To see that she had all she needed, while knowing that her aim was to want nothing lest there should be extra work for others, was no easy task. It never struck her that people loved to do things for her. She knew that at that time others were unwell too, and she so disliked to add to the labours of anyone.

One of Miss Kitching's most inspiring qualities was that she just did not recognise the meaning of defeat. In those war years there were frustrations enough in the book trade alone, but she was always prepared to start on a fresh line of planning if one proved fruitless. I have known no one else so able in bringing victory out of apparent defeat. Quietly conceding, retiring when she could not gain her point, a few weeks or months later, unobserved, E.K. had returned to the ground from which she had been driven, and was probably advancing on her own, in the way she thought best.

19p7 emc72



For all her gentle gaiety she must, of course, have known depression. What did she do when things went badly or she could not see her way? She washed her white kid gloves ready for church on Sunday, or—when things were at their worst—she darned her woollen underwear in the seclusion of her tiny bedroom! She once told me that it was a very soothing occupation for frayed nerves. How right she was, as always. . . . I think of that sometimes in the second half of our century, in a world of plastic and nylon in which darning is likely to become a lost art; how and when are we going to gather that serenity which played so large a part in Miss Kitching's life? With her Christian faith it brought her the wisdom, happiness and enthusiasms we all delighted to share. She used the little things of life—all the joys or troubles that came her way—and built them into the one grand theme with which she upheld Miss Mason's work that was her own life and being.

EILEEN C. PLUMPTRE  
(C.M.C.)

I had a warm regard and affection for Miss Kitching, a very distinguished old lady. She died full of years and honour. It was a privilege to know her. For me her friendship, for that is what it was, was something I shall always value. She was an immense tonic and stimulant. Perhaps it was easier for me, as an outsider, to talk to her than it was for many inside the P.N.E.U. and P.U.S. I am sure she was looked upon with tremendous awe and respect owing to her close ties with the Founder. I used to argue fiercely and she would love it and bait me further! And then we would burst into laughter, thoroughly enjoying every moment. The parting was always the same. How good it was of me to give her so much of my time—a humbling remark which made me realise something of the greatness of the woman who had allowed me to talk with her with such obvious pleasure for perhaps an hour or more, but what an hour! The goodness was all hers for giving me a little glimpse of her intellect and greatness. It was she who taught me something of the spirituality of science. How she loved to argue.

And then one can remember her beauty and devoutness in worship on the rare occasions when latterly she could strengthen herself to make the real physical effort to go St. Mary's. I constantly offered that the Church should come to her in her room, but the answer was always the same, that while she could walk on her feet she would go herself, and that clergy had far too much to do to wait on the whims of an old woman. As if anyone could call Miss Kitching capricious or old! Every time I went I used to ask after the progress of the 'biography' and bully her to get on with it. I do not know how much she ever wrote of it, but there must be a mass of material for someone to wade through. I express the hope that when this book materialises it will also include much about Elsie Kitching, for the movement owes immensely to her.

VERNON D. CLARKE  
(Vicar of Aspatia, formerly Assistant Curate  
of Ambleside Parish Church)

Lady Reid writes:

There was little that escaped the vigilance of Miss Elsie Kitching—many years ago I happened to give, on the Ceylon Wireless, a short talk to parents: when I came home in 1943 it was to find that Miss Kitching knew all about it—she was very thrilled too, to hear all the story of the translations of Miss Mason's *Home Education* into Bengali and Assamese. In her I found not only a great friend but a very wise counsellor: to be with her was such joy, for her mind was ever reaching out to wide horizons.

Truly we who have had the privilege of her friendship are blessed indeed; her influence will remain ever with us and her example fortify us. She was faithful to the end and we can but rejoice that she is come to the Haven where she would be.

AMY H. REID

Miss Kitching—she is part of my earliest memories of childhood holidays in Ambleside, when visits to Scale How were among the highlights to be treasured in memory until 'next time'.

My mother was Lydia James (*née* Hall), and as friend and disciple of Miss Mason was always welcome at the 'House of Education', and I followed eagerly in her wake and absorbed the liberal outlook and happy, loving atmosphere whose centre and heart was Elsie Kitching.

Later, during the war years of 1939—1945, I came to know her intimately in my own right, when we were living in a cottage at Waterhead and meeting her regularly several times a week.

Her eager interest in the small, personal concerns of her friends and the hundreds of past and present children of the Parents' Union School, as well as in the wider field of international affairs, always astonished me, and I think that it was this loving preoccupation with others—always outward turning, never thinking of self—which kept her so amazingly young at heart.

What will leap to my mind when Elsie's name is mentioned, as it will be as long as her friends meet each other? Gentleness, love and a high idealism, so that one was ashamed to fall below her standards, although she would never reproach one.

Elsie Kitching was a friend in a lifetime: a memory to cherish with love, joy and pride. She leaves a blank which can never be filled, but though we may miss her we must not grieve for her, since this is the last thing she would wish.

URSULA BARTER

I have known Miss Kitching for the past thirty-one years and during those years my admiration for her grew each time I met and talked with her. Never did I see her otherwise than pleasant, with a happy smile always for everybody. I had many conversations with her. I was always reminded about the arrival of the flycatchers and asked to prepare the nesting-boxes for them.



One of her greatest pleasures was being in attendance at the Ambleside Rushbearing. Only last July did she watch the children as they passed along Rydal Road and up Smithy Brow, remarking as they went by on how beautifully they were carrying their Rushbearings. Miss Kitching was a person readily interested in the welfare of the young people and particularly those whose parents she knew. She was keen to know what progress they were making in their respective careers. On one occasion I had the pleasure of her company in my home over the Christmas holidays and during that time found her to be a most charming and considerate guest.

A short time ago, prior to her sad departure, I was frequently in contact with her and I especially remember her expressing delight at being able to see Stock Beck again after I had pruned back the trees which had been obstructing her view. Another kind thought, on her part, was to give me an annual reminder about making holly wreaths for the graves of Miss Mason and Miss Parish.

Miss Kitching left us as she had lived—peacefully and quietly—and will always be remembered in this way.

EDWARD FLITTERS  
(Head Gardener at the Charlotte Mason College)

I always knew Miss Kitching had an exceptional interest in and love of children, but it was not until my husband and I took our small son (when he was four) to see her at Low Nook that I realised how very deep and real was her understanding.

He viewed the visit with apprehension as he does not talk readily to grown-ups, especially when he meets them out of his own home, but he chatted away, almost at once, to her about a book on Australia which happened to be by her. She opened it and soon they were both poring over the pictures and comparing impressions. She obviously won his heart because, quite of his own accord, he used to write letters to her—he started by drawings which she seemed to understand! I once overheard him saying to another small boy something about 'my friend at Ambleside, Miss Kitching'. To him she was not just 'one of those people Mummy and Daddy go to see at Ambleside', but 'my friend'.

LYDIA HERING  
(C.M.C.)

E.K.

Memories of over forty years crowd in, and earliest memories of student days are strangely clear. A quiet figure always near Miss Mason, at hand if needed, walking behind her to the front door where Barrow and the open coach stood waiting, putting a copper hot-water bottle at her feet and tucking the rug round her; Miss Mason's gracious smile as the carriage bowled away down the drive was her signal to turn and go back to her work. E.K. sitting at her small table by the French windows of the drawing-room on a Sunday afternoon, gravely alert to write down every word as Miss Mason talked to us for maybe

half-an-hour on a verse from the Gospels. Almost silent bird-walks on wintry sunlight, by an expert who could tell you just what field-marks to watch for, and what call-notes heralded the returning migrants on the terrace at night. Then there was the gaiety of conversation sitting at E.K.'s table in the dining-room.

When she took Miss Mason's place (and how she hated one to say so!) for me there were years abroad with her staunch support and understanding as she shared our work with children and our adventures of nature study in far countries.

The years since the war have brought the privilege of 'open house to old friends' in the sunny upper room at Low Nook, so strangely like the morning-room at Scale How. In both, the remembered picture is of manifold activity, usually at high pressure, correcting proofs in long 'galleys' draped over a desk laden with papers and correspondence and photographs of P.U.S. children and tiny dishes of treasures brought to her from moor and mountain or a vase of yellow Welsh poppies which Mrs. Hindmoor (her good friend who comes daily from the village to help in Low Nook) would bring for her. 'Mrs. Hindmoor is wonderful! I could never get them to stay alive for Miss Mason—they would drop at once!' And of course there was food for the birds outside her window and, to her great joy this autumn, a ring of gorgeous red fly agaric toadstools round the little birch tree not far away from it.

'Bird' news was constantly exchanged and her expert knowledge of bird life in the neighbourhood was invaluable. Just before Christmas a friend who often telephones bird observations in the valley rang up on a bitter cold night to say that a nutcracker had just been beating against the lighted window; 'we have looked it all up and it couldn't be anything else'. I wrote at once to Miss Kitching, saying that the observer was 'quite safe'. Her reply on a post-card was typical: 'The only record in fifty years proved to be an immature starling!'—which roused an indignant reply from me. But she was right. I have just heard that the bird had come again later that night, had been caught and brought into the house, and *was* an immature starling! So another lesson in caution has been learnt, and I can almost hear dear Miss Kitching chuckling with glee!

How perennially young she was! Young in mind and heart and spirit and interests, always seeing fresh visions of the coming of the Kingdom, eager and enthusiastic as many a younger mind has long since ceased to be. Retirement? she never *could* retire! Sometimes one was greeted with: 'Go away! I'm much too busy to see you now', trying to race 'the little time I have left' to write Miss Mason's biography. Sometimes it was: 'Come here at once—you haven't been to see me for *months*! If you are *very* good, I'll show you something special in the post this morning.' And how she delighted in all I could tell about my work in a nearby hospital school; she knew those children as individuals and would ask after them as Miss Mason used to ask about children in our family posts long ago.

MARGERY GLADDING (C.M.C.)



I came to work at Low Nook two years ago and I have never found anyone who appreciated as much as Miss Kitching did anything we did for her. She had a lovely nature and I shall miss her smile which greeted me every morning. She had a very happy disposition and did enjoy a joke; we had many a good laugh.

Miss Kitching loved her home and its beautiful surroundings and during this Christmastide she remarked to me several times, "I am so very happy to be at home and amongst such good friends who look after me". She used to get up at nine and was always ready for work by half-past ten. I shall miss seeing her sitting at her desk in her lovely big room. She liked to look out of the window and watch the Beehive children running up the drive on their way to school and she often said to me, "There are the students of the future, Mrs. Hindmoor". All through the summer and autumn she has been sorting and tidying everything. The last time I saw her, on the day before she died, she was resting on the sofa when I went to say 'goodnight' to her: she asked me to move some papers from one drawer into another saying "I want to leave my house in order, and I have finished it all now". We laughed about it together, but I shall always remember the last thing she said to me and how happy she looked.

She was a shining example to all of us and Low Nook will never be quite the same without Miss Kitching, but her lovely memory will always linger there because, as she often said, 'The work must carry on', and so one feels comforted in the Christian knowledge that she truly has gained her well-earned rest.

JANET HINDMOOR

### TRUTH—FIRST AND OLD ACQUAINTANCE

I owe Miss Kitching such a lot, for she was always so sweet and generous to the young and foolish. I have written what follows because she asked me to write something on these lines the last time we talked together on December 19th, and because it seems to me that this quotation is particularly apt for her. I told her I did not think I could write adequately but that I knew what she meant even though I could not do justice to it. What is true about the familiarity of truth is, I think, also true of death.

No one ever went to visit Miss Kitching without bringing something away—often a book, a paper or a cutting suggested by her reading, writing or listening-in—sometimes a recommendation to do one of these things oneself—and always the unconscious gifts of hope, courage, joy. We all know her lovely sense of humour as well as her great interest in modern science and her delight in the closing gap between science and the humanities, and her awareness of the need for patience in the progress of ideas, many of which she saw coming to fruition at last. With her love of ideas and of people, she seemed perpetually young, and if, as has been said, when one has lost the sense of wonder and of hero-worship one is old, then Miss Kitching remained young to the end. Yet I think her wisdom was the gift by which she most enriched us—that, and her faith in a great vision.

In this last talk I had with her just before Christmas, she quoted to me Benjamin Whichcote's words printed at the top of 'A Short Synopsis of the Educational Philosophy advanced by the Founder of the P.N.E.U.': *No sooner doth the truth . . . come into the soul's sight, but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance.* We were enabled her to see education not merely as a method or a collection of principles, but as something much wider and more splendid—a 'learning to live', a learning to see, however imperfectly, the reality or inward vision we call truth, which transcends outward sense and travels beyond reason.

'You know what the quotation means,' she said. 'Write it down for me.' The quotation, found so unerringly, and going to the root of things in the way Miss Kitching's quotations always did, summed up for me what I had a few days before haltingly tried to express. How does one know when one is on the right path? How can one tell whether one's view is straight? Perhaps this is what the Three Kings from the East wondered when they followed the Star to Bethlehem and found themselves unexpectedly in a most unroyal place. But when they had arrived they had no doubt. They recognised the truth when they found it.

When we meet the truth, we notice, I think, three things. First, that like a jigsaw, the pieces fit into place unexpectedly. Lesser truths dawn, and are seen to be connected; it all ties up.

Then, we shrink in size as we see ourselves and our problems from a different and strange angle, and like those algebraical numbers with recurring indices, more and more dawns upon us. This might be a depressing process but it is not so because truth is always bigger than man and independent of self.

Yet—and this is what strikes me most—though alien in this sense, strange and surprising, truth is always a friend; the stranger is recognised, the surprise is joyful. An old acquaintance! Or as Wordsworth put it:

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.*

Miss Kitching has returned home, and we who love her are glad for her sake and deeply thankful for the help and guidance she has given us in following the star which shines for all men.

HELEN LIVINGSTONE  
(Headmistress of the C.M.C. Practising School)



E.K. 1948—1955

When Miss Kitching retired from her work as Director of the P.U.S. and Editor of the *Parents' Review* it was in order to devote all her time and strength to her special task of telling the *Story* of Charlotte Mason. This was henceforth the main purpose of her life, and she set to work with loving care to prepare for the press a mass of material gathered from research into all the relevant sources. But more and more she came to feel that the actual events of Charlotte Mason's life were of secondary importance; 'it is Miss Mason's thought that matters', she would say, and so she steeped herself afresh in Charlotte Mason's writings and traced the development of her teaching. From time to time Miss Kitching would sum up the results of these 'adventures' in a short paper which she would circulate among her friends, and she was greatly cheered by the response aroused. She would seize eagerly upon any indication of a *meeting* between the ideas of Charlotte Mason and those of the intellectual and spiritual leaders of to-day, and would say joyfully, 'At last, after fifty years and more, Miss Mason's thought is coming into its own'.

Such a task could not be hurried, and was, from time to time, laid aside in order to carry out the revision and reprinting of Charlotte Mason's own books, so necessary for the growth of the P.N.E.U. movement as a whole. But all the time, in that pleasant quiet room at Low Nook, with its open windows and its laden bookshelves, the *Story* was taking shape, and Miss Kitching's normal daily routine included a morning of concentrated work with her secretary. The rest of the day would be given to preparation for the next day's work, varied by reading or talk with her friends or listening to the wireless, by which she kept in close touch with contemporary developments in thought and action.

Her interests included a wealth of subjects, and hardly a day passed without some discovery of a new and living idea which she hastened to share with others; the book one was urged to read forthwith might be a treatise on religion or philosophy such as those by Archbishop William Temple, Sir Charles Sherrington, Bishop Stephen Neill, Dr. John Baillie or Professor De Burgh; it might equally well be *The Little World of Don Camillo*, or *Do Babies Have Worries?* or *The Legend of the Unicorn* illustrated by mediaeval French tapestries. She was particularly fascinated by scientific progress, and human relationships concerned her greatly; she welcomed the growing recognition of the importance of the family as 'the unit of the nation'.

Her personal friendship was extended to all sorts and conditions of men, women and children. Though after her retirement she felt that the demands of her work prevented her from meeting more than a very few newcomers, she welcomed old friends, especially Charlotte Mason Teachers and their children. Young people always found themselves at home with her, and she got quickly into touch with the Fairfield girls who slept at Low Nook at one time. Students in the house soon took her into their lives; for instance, Miss Simon (of the P.U.S. Staff) recalls the last night of this autumn term, when 'about thirty students, made up of the present ones at Low Nook, those who had lived here the

previous year, and a few of their friends, sang impromptu carols in Miss Kitching's room. She loved every moment of it, and before they went she was passing round one or two rather unusual Christmas cards, in which S. Joseph, not the Virgin, was shown holding the Holy Child. This was a very informal affair, some students wearing outdoor, some indoor dress, and some gathered in on their way to bed. It was quite a usual thing to find groups of the 1955 Low Nook students talking to Miss Kitching, on the landing or in her room. They were always welcome, and always went away feeling that they had learned something or inspired with a fresh interest. On the second Saturday of the term, a party of students who had been at Low Nook last year went for a picnic on Latterbarrow. They found many interesting things, including a small baby squirrel; they wasted no time in running straight up to Miss Kitching's room to tell her all about it, their news was received with her usual quick interest and enthusiasm, and, of course, she showed them books in which they could look up things they had found!

Miss Kitching never ceased to take pleasure in the birds that came to her window. She would stand there watching the heron which visited Stock Beck. She was the first to point out a pair of waxwings on the drive. She stood in the garden watching a goldfinch feeding on a melancholy thistle head until quite a little crowd of students had collected to share her delight. One March she was called at her own request to listen to the migrants returning in the night, and she went into the students' room to make sure they had not missed the sounds. She was, of course, an authority on bird-lore, and great was the triumph of anyone whose claim to have seen some rare bird was accepted by her.

Miss Kitching loved all wild flowers, and was delighted when 'bits and pieces' were brought to her from the lanes or fells. Yellow mountain poppies, blue jasione, flame-coloured bog asphodel fruits, Grass of Parnassus with its uncurling gold stamens, the soft green of opening beech leaves, the delicate pattern of hazel or alder twigs against a white wall—these were some of her favourites, to be welcomed year by year in their season.

Miss Kitching's last Christmas was full of joy. She had completed various tasks she had set herself, and was planning fresh activities, for it was always to the future that she pressed eagerly forward. She spent the morning in following the Christmas broadcasts of services and music which, as she said, had the Star of Bethlehem for their theme. She listened to the afternoon programme, *The Star We Follow*, with the keenest interest, and indeed she was planning a New Year message for her friends which should express the relationship between different ways of approach to knowledge. She did not regard Science and Religion as rivals, still less as enemies, but, in Charlotte Mason's tradition, allies in the apprehension of the one true Light. She rejoiced in the fact that world peace seemed unbroken on Christmas Day, and looked forward with confidence to the promise of a new age in spiritual as well as material progress. She found in Her Majesty the Queen's message to the British family of peoples a drawing together of many relationships and she entered with delight into the fun of Wilfred Pickles' Christmas Party.



The Archdeacon of Westmorland (The Venerable S. C. Bulley) gave Miss Kitching what proved to be her Last Communion on S. John's Day (December 27th). After her death he spoke of the talk he had had with her after the service that morning. The Archdeacon said:

'She was her usual self—her body tired perhaps, her spirit glowing, her mind alert. She entered with deep devotion into the service and after it spoke of the spiritual and mental refreshment which she had derived from the Christmas Day broadcast programmes. That last conversation I had with Miss Kitching was, like others, stimulating and forward looking. The Christmas Day sermons she had heard, the beauty of the carols and their values as a medium of religious truth, the hope that resides in a true concept of education and the danger that lurks in a false—that last conversation was what I would call a typical "Miss Kitching conversation"—penetrating, eager, hopeful, creative and yet humble all the time. Miss Kitching was one of the most widely read women—in theology as in much else—it has ever been my privilege to meet—the sort of person whom any parish priest would rejoice to number among his parishioners.'

Miss Kitching spent the next day in her usual health and spirits. She asked that a new member of the staff might be introduced to her, wrote some letters, prepared her desk for the next day's work, talked once more of what she called 'one of the happiest Christmases of my life', and spoke of Browning's picture of the beloved S. John in *A Death in the Desert*. Early in the morning of December 29th she slipped quietly into 'the Light of everlasting life'.

MAUD MARSDEN  
(Director of Studies, P.U.S.)

#### FROM THE P.U.S.

Often I have talked with Miss Kitching about the time when, after Charlotte Mason's death, she was faced with carrying on the work. As always with her rememberings, the grave and the gay were mingled, and it is thus we shall remember our beloved 'Kitchie'.

Just now two thoughts which she has passed on are uppermost in our minds. First, the comforting knowledge that the living strength of the work done in the name of Charlotte Mason is greater than any one of us who carry it out and that it has so very many friends who help us to foster its growth. That leads on to the second thought—the tradition of hospitality, personal hospitality, which was so much a part of her way of life. We should like you all to know that this, too, we mean to carry on; so please come to Low Nook, to remember, to plan for the future, to talk about this and that or just to exchange greetings. You will be as welcome as ever and your coming will forge another link in the chain of tradition in the hands of those of us who now pause to look back and so gather strength to press forward.

E. L. MOLYNEUX  
(Director, Parents' Union School)

## THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL LIFE AND HOME LIFE\*

by CHARLOTTE MASON

### I

#### SCHOOL, A NEW EXPERIENCE

When the child goes to school a new life begins for him; not only so, but no change that may come to him afterwards will be in the same sense a new life. And for this reason: socially speaking, two lives are possible to us—private and public life; we live as members of a family, and as members of a commonwealth. Hitherto, the child has lived in the family; his duties have all been pretty plain, and his affection pretty fairly bestowed. Of course he loves and obeys his parents, more or less, and is fond of his brothers and sisters—there is no choice for him; and the law of the family and the love of the family follow him when he is allowed to mix with the outside world. 'Mother says' is his law, 'Father told me' his supreme authority. But when he goes to school, all that is changed: though he is still loving and dutiful towards those at home, other things have come in, and the child looks upon the world from a new standpoint. Parents may think, when they send their children to school, that the masters or mistresses and the studies are the points to be considered; that the children go to learn, i.e. to learn out of books, and that the heads of the school are, for the time being, in the place of parents to the children.

How far this may be true depends on another factor, sometimes left out of count, namely, the 'All the boys' and 'All the girls' of schoolboy and schoolgirl phrase. The wise parent, in selecting a school for his child, is not satisfied to examine the syllabus and to know that the masters bear a high character; he sends out feelers to test the direction of *public opinion* in the school: if public opinion set with a strong current towards order, effort, virtue, that is the school for him; his boy, he is assured, once entered there, will be carried along towards the right. No doubt there will be a few turbulent spirits in every considerable school, and lawlessness is contagious, but the thing to find out is, how far the lead of the scapegraces is followed by the rest.

But the direction of 'public opinion', it is said, rests with the master. Not altogether: he will do his best to get it on his side; but he may be, like Arnold and Thring, years before he succeeds, and that, though he may have everything in his own character to fit him for the office of schoolmaster. We know how little to be depended upon is public opinion in the world; far more, in the little world of school, it veers with every shifting of the wind, just because boys and girls are less reasonable, more emotional, than men and women. Yet, little as it is to be depended upon, this *vox populi* within the school governs the school, and the masters are nowhere except as they get it on their side. Now, this fact shows the real constitution and government of the school: the family is a limited *monarchy*, with sovereign parents; the school is a *republic*, with an elected president. Of course the master may hold his post in spite of the boys, but his authority and influence, the real matters in

\* From 'Some Studies in the Formation of Character'.



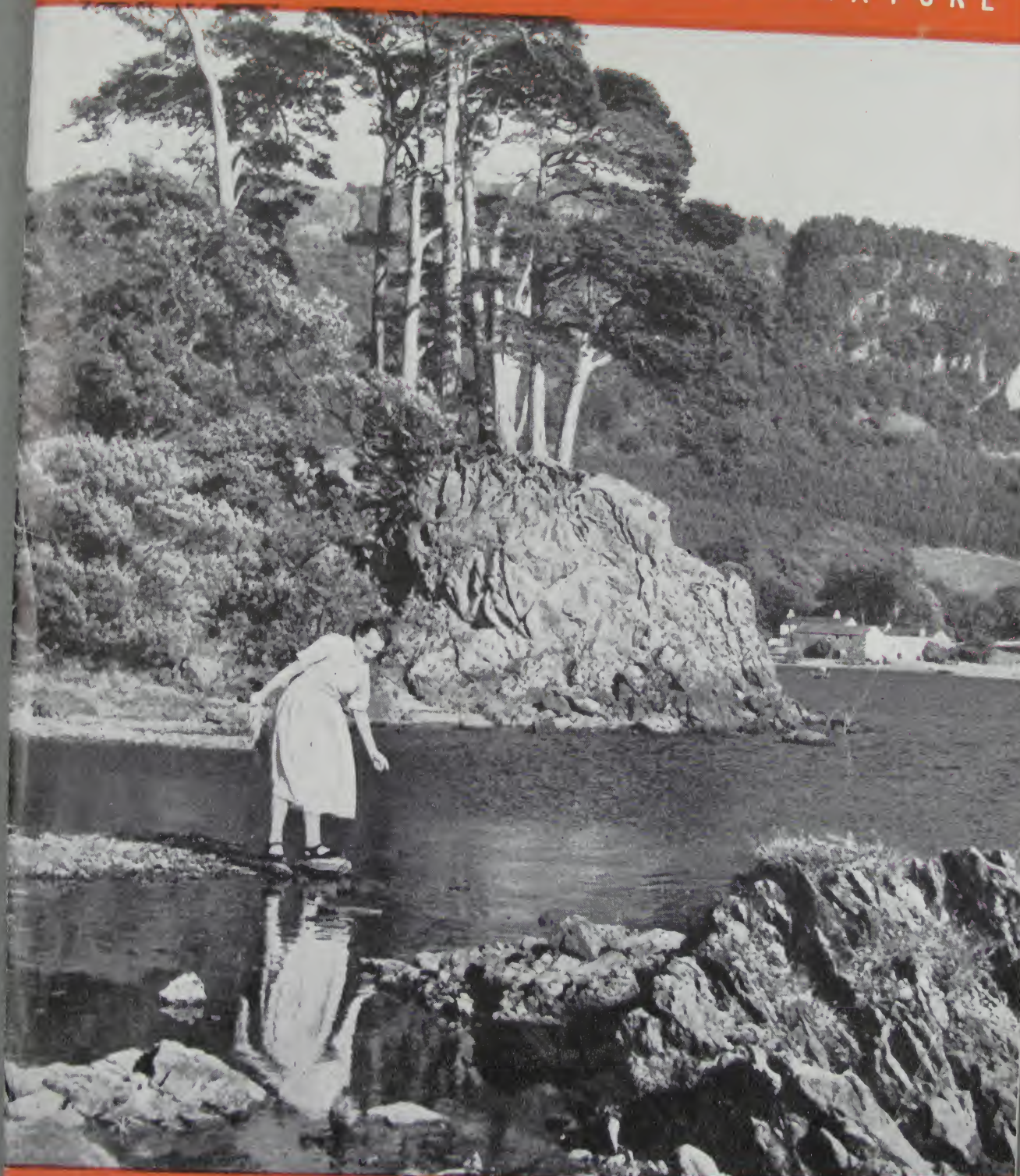
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# CUMBRIA

LAKE LAND LIFE AND LITERATURE



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## CONTENTS

ELTERWATER, by Nora Mather	74
CUMBRIAN NOTEBOOK	75
CHARLOTTE MASON AND HER HOUSE OF EDUCATION, by E. Kitching	78
"SING FOR THEE SUPPER," Short Story by C. L. Marriner	81
A LAKELAND MISCELLANY	83
TOPICS FROM THE VALE OF EDEN, by Peter Lockwood	86
ODD STORIES FROM WESTMORLAND	88
MY LAKELAND FARM, by Joseph Park	93
LAKELAND BEEKEEPING, by Tom Milburn	94
DIARY FROM A DALE FIRESIDE	96
A SPRING DAY IN THE EDEN VALLEY, by John Armthwaite	97
A CUMBRIAN LETTERBOX	102
LAKELAND YOUTH HOSTELS	104

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# Charlotte Mason and Her House of Education

BY E. KITCHING

CHARLOTTE Maria Shaw Mason was born at Bangor on January 1st, 1842. Her parents lived in Liverpool where her father was a merchant who, like many another, suffered heavy losses through the troubles of the '48's and '49's in the United States. An only child, Charlotte was educated at home and used to watch the children daily on their way to school. One never-to-be-forgotten day she was taken to the school and saw the older girls working with little, thin, text-books, so different from the "big beautiful books" her father and mother used for her at home. "And so I found my vocation at eight," she writes years later.

At 16 she was left an orphan without means or relatives. She spent two years with friends and then started to train as a teacher under the Home and Colonial Society in London, but she was too delicate to live in London and the authorities sent her to finish her training in theory and practice at the Davison Church School in Worthing, where the Chaplain superintended her studies in philosophy and education, and she was Headmistress of the Infants' School, which started with children of two. Later she planned and was Headmistress of a Church High School for older children.

She was in Worthing for 12 years and learnt to know and love children both at school and in the house of a friend who brought up her brother's children while their father was in India. "I found children at home much more self-revealing."

SHE had to give up her work because of ill-health, went to this friend for a year and also spent some time abroad. She was then offered a post as Lecturer in Physiology and Hygiene and Mistress of Method, at Bishop Otter College, Chichester, and later became Vice-Principal (1874-1878). She had during her sixteen years of teaching spent much time in long tramps, learning to know what "the lore of a county" had to offer towards a liberal education.

In the meantime two friends (met during her training) had schools of their own, one in Ambleside, one in Bradford, and she

THIS article has been written with a special purpose concerning Charlotte Mason and the foundation of her work at Ambleside. The work still goes on under the direction of the Charlotte Mason Foundation Council, including the Parents' Union School and the Charlotte Mason College in Ambleside, and in close connection with the Parents' National Educational Union and the Parents' Review in London. This year marks the 66th anniversary of the P.N.E.U., the 65th of the Parents' Review, the 63rd of the Parents' Union School, and the 62nd of the Charlotte Mason College. It also marks the Triennial Conference of the Charlotte Mason College Association, with its theme a "Legacy of Thought."

spent holidays with both of them. One had taken over, at the request of Miss Clough, a small school for the boys and girls of Ambleside, which Miss Clough gave up on her appointment as First Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge.

But now Charlotte Mason wanted time for writing, and accepted an invitation from the other friend, who had started a High School in Bradford, to give some help in the preparation of girls for the Senior Cambridge examination, but with as much time as she wanted for writing. Her first book was *The Forty Shires*, her next a series of Geography books for Forms I-V. For these she spent much time in London reading in the British Museum.

SHE gained experience in parish visiting and finally offered a series of lectures in 1885 in support of a Church Hall. For Charlotte Mason felt that perhaps the time had come to formulate the principles she had gathered after her 25 years of experience. The Home Education lectures on "A Method of Education resting upon a basis of natural, that is, Divine Law" appeared in 1886 as *Home Education*. Many friends gathered round to support the formation of a Parents' Educational Union, and in 1887 Mrs. Francis Steinthal held a meeting to discuss how to further the work.

Charlotte Mason had written a number of articles for magazines as a sequel to

*Home Education*, discussing the subjects it was necessary for parents to study in order to be able to meet the needs of their children, needs which ranged over the whole field of knowledge—of God, man, and the universe. She had gained much from discussions with parents on these matters, and added the subject of "The science of the proportion of things."

One of these articles, dealing with "The Education of the Future," was the subject of Charlotte Mason's first lecture in London in 1888, and she gave the date as 1990 for a children's *Magna Carta*. The fields for education taken up in these articles were dealt with at full length in the books published later: *Parents and Children*, ("the Family is the Unit of the Nation"), *School Education*, ("Education is the Science of Relations") and *Ourselves* ("Self-education").

THE Parents' Educational Union Branch in Bradford met with such success that it was decided the time had come to carry its work further afield. Charlotte Mason wrote to the chief leaders of the educational thought of the day, from whom she received much support. In 1890, Miss Clough invited her to Newnham and in the train on the way she sketched out a pamphlet with the odd name of *Draft Proof*, dealing with the administration of the whole work, in order to discuss it with Miss Clough, who invited a number of leading people in the educational world to meet her.

The result of this was a public meeting in London in 1890 to form a Parents' National Educational Union and to start a *Parents' Review* as its organ. In quick succession followed the Parents' Union School, a Correspondence School for Children aged 6-18 (1891). Lecturing tours up and down the country were taken by Charlotte Mason and her colleagues, but Bradford was still the centre of all the work.

The next question was where could a suitable place be found for training students in a new method?

In 1864 Charlotte Mason had learnt to know and love Ambleside. Here was a spot full of beauty and literary associations—"an unwall'd university" as once she called it—a quiet place where her students might prepare for their high vocation by learning of the nature and of the needs of children at first hand, where much joy in living comes in an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking. Years later she said to one of her students: "You have come here to learn, not to teach, but how to live."

All that makes for a liberal education already contained in the programmes of the Parents' Union School found a place in the College curriculum and were used in the Practising School. The prospectus of the Training College stated that: "The aim of education presented to the students is to produce a human being at his best, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually, quickened by religion and with some knowledge of nature, art, literature, and manual work."

So Charlotte Mason founded her House of Education in the place she had been



CHARLOTTE MASON (1842-1923)



looking for, and she settled at "Springfield," Ambleside, in 1892. Here too she found, besides the literary associations, the spirit of a place long associated with great thinkers and their teaching, as well as the liberal education that comes from the lore of a countryside where "common information," as Huxley called it, laid the foundation of science and was in itself part of a liberal education.

To Ambleside she brought from Bradford the work of the P.N.E.U., the *Parents' Review* and Parents' Union School. The P.N.E.U. was centred in London in 1894 and the rest of the work was transferred in 1895 to Scale How, a house and grounds of literary memories, standing two hundred feet above the village where Charlotte Mason carried on the work until she died in 1923.

In 1922 she spoke at a P.N.E.U. Conference held in Ambleside, while still at work with hundreds of children in her world-wide Parents' Union School, and with many students in posts of various kinds, as well as those in training.

She had in 1904 written *A Synopsis*, embodying her "Philosophy of Education" and she had just finished, at 80, her last book, *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education* ("A Liberal Education for All"), having at last seen her principles and practice established in some State Schools.

In a centenary message (1942) Queen Elizabeth, now the Queen Mother, wrote:

"Teachers owe much to Charlotte Mason's deep insight into child psychology and to the new principles in character building and mind training which she advocated, but parents owe her still more.

The gratitude of countless mothers in all parts of the world, who have profited by her counsel, will be her enduring memorial."

THIS country has produced many great teachers and a few important creators in the field of education. Any list of the latter which did not include the name of Miss Charlotte Mason, the founder of the Parents' National Educational Union—the P.N.E.U.—would be incomplete. Long before her theories became accepted principles, she saw the importance of developing from the first a child's enjoyment of literature, art, and music, and insisted that this could only be rightly done by contact with the first-rate in all these fields; she succeeded in devising a system of examination which made it a test of development and not, as it too often is, a deadly enemy of real education and, to take one example of her teaching methods, by her use of "narration" in teaching English she found a way to develop attention, memory, and a power of using language far in advance of what is normally expected of young children. For she was not a mere theorist. She founded the Parents' Union School, and the Training College and its Practising School at Ambleside, where her principles were applied and tested, and whence teachers trained in her methods have gone out to practise them in this country and far beyond it.

—Sir Richard Livingstone, foreword to the third edition of Miss Mason's *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education* (Dent, 10/6).

## THE WAY THEY SPOKE IN CUMBRIA

*A man describes his wife:*

A good un of her swort, but a mortal bad swort, like reed herrin broth.

*A shepherd argues with a friend:*

Thou need say nought about creukt tempers awivver, for thy temper's meadd o' nought bit tip horns and grunstan hannels.

*Provost Fox on Wasdale:*

A congregation of smells, like Wasdale Head Chapel in sheep salving time.

*An Old Man on Marriage:*

Fwolks talks about love! wey, issent it just as easy to love a lass wid a lock o' brass as yan et hes nin?

## OUR SHORT STORY

# "SING FOR THEE SUPPER"

BY C. L. MARRINER

FEW happenings in a village like ours escape the publican's notice. In fact, public houses everywhere might be described as the listening post of the local community, up here, at Wetherdale, in Cumberland, the *Twa Dogs* is no exception. That's how I came by the inside story of Sam Moffat, an old sweat with a bark on him like a sergeant-major, whose only stripes were awarded by an old-fashioned schoolmaster in the quarter best calculated to discourage bragging.

Sam's a local who ran away and joined up. After which his existence was forgotten until he returned several years ago, still no bigger than three-pennyworth of coppers, and claimed his mother's estate, Cockcroft cottage — adjoining Widow Thomson's struggling bakery — and a steady little income from the rents of that and a couple of cottage properties. He had to realise on his savings and buy himself out of the Army to do it, I'm told.

We soon got Sam's measure. With his background, it was natural that he should start using the *Twa Dogs*. Morning and evening he would march in, stiff-backed and with his eyes smartly to the front, approaching the bar like a diminutive Grenadier crossing the parade ground. There he stayed until closing time, sinking pints with the best. A grand talker he was, too, discussing every subject under the sun in a manner that would have put many highly paid and publicised entertainers to shame.

With his own cottage and money to spare, Sam seemed set for life, and so it might have proved if he hadn't overreached himself. There's a tidy parcel of land attached to "Cockcroft," and his nibs has the greenest fingers I know. Planned to turn it into a regular show place, he did, and even got to calling it his little Eden.

SAM'S downfall was good living. Gyver-some we called him, because he didn't stop at loving his stomach: he practically worshipped it. Not only that, but he made it quite clear that in view of his unexpected

turn of good fortune he intended to remain so.

"George," he confided to me in that astonishing, leather-lunged voice of his, "life owes me a living. I've had to make do on short commons far too long; but now the world is me oyster, and the rest of me days are dedicated to number one. No more iron rations, but plenty of beef and beer and roses, roses all t'way." Then he banged down his pot and barked: "Fill it up, landlord."

Sam's speech was always a bit flowery, but this time I was in two minds about whether it was him or the beer talking. "So that's the way of it," I grunted, re-charging his pot and sliding it across the bar. "Nice to be some folks."

"Aye," Harry Ruddick, from Endfold Farm, chipped in. "Likely somebody else has got their eye on thee Eden—Adam! Cherchez la femme, tha knows. They tell me yon Widder Thomson finds it terrible lonesome since she planted her third husband."

That did it. In less time than it takes to tell Sam's colour ranged from chalk-white to deepest purple. He opened his mouth to rant, but the words refused to come. He was like a trout on the end of a line, gasping and spluttering and fighting for his voice which, when it did return, was reduced to a strangled whisper.

"And she can stop that way," he got out finally. "I've kept out of their clutches so far, and I'll not be shackled at my time of life—not to any woman. They're nobbut a blamed nagging nuisance cluttering up place. Worse'n a whole battalion of junior officers. Chap's always at their beck and . . ."

BEWILDERED by the flow of invective he had released, Harry Ruddick tried to stem the flood. "Nay, lad," he interrupted with a ponderous attempt at jocular. "Nay need to lead off like that. A fine upstanding chap like thee should be a match for any woman. Besides, it would make a power of difference to thee